

12. Numerals

(See also Chapter 13 “Tabular Work” and Chapter 14 “Leaderwork”)

- 12.1.** Most rules for the use of numerals are based on the general principle that the reader comprehends numerals more readily than numerical word expressions, particularly in technical, scientific, or statistical matter. However, for special reasons, numbers are spelled out in certain instances, except in FIC & punc. and Fol. Lit. matter.
- 12.2.** The following rules cover the most common conditions that require a choice between the use of numerals and words. Some of them, however, are based on typographic appearance rather than on the general principle stated above.
- 12.3.** Arabic numerals are preferable to Roman numerals.

Numbers expressed in figures

- 12.4.** A figure is used for a single number of 10 or more with the exception of the first word of the sentence. (See also rules 12.9 and 12.23.)

50 ballots

24 horses

nearly 13 buckets

10 guns

about 40 men

10 times as large

Numbers and numbers in series

- 12.5.** When 2 or more numbers appear in a sentence and 1 of them is 10 or larger, figures are used for each number. (See supporting rule 12.6.)

Each of 15 major commodities (9 metal and 6 nonmetal) was in supply.

but Each of nine major commodities (five metal and four nonmetal) was in supply.

Petroleum came from 16 fields, of which 8 were discovered in 1956.

but Petroleum came from nine fields, of which eight were discovered in 1956.

That man has 3 suits, 2 pairs of shoes, and 12 pairs of socks.

but That man has three suits, two pairs of shoes, and four hats.

Of the 13 engine producers, 6 were farm equipment manufacturers, 6 were principally engaged in the production of other types of machinery, and 1 was not classified in the machinery industry.

but Only nine of these were among the large manufacturing companies, and only three were among the largest concerns.

There were three 6-room houses, five 4-room houses, and three 2-room cottages, and they were built by 20 carpenters. (See rule 12.21.)

There were three six-room houses, five four-room houses, and three two-room cottages, and they were built by nine carpenters.

but If two columns of sums of money add or subtract one into the other and one carries points and ciphers, the other should also carry points and ciphers.

At the hearing, only one Senator and one Congressman testified.
There are four or five things that can be done.

12.6. A unit of measurement, time, or money (as defined in rule 12.9), which is always expressed in figures, does not affect the use of figures for other numerical expressions within a sentence.

Each of the five girls earned 75 cents an hour.
Each of the 15 girls earned 75 cents an hour.
A team of four men ran the 1-mile relay in 3 minutes 20 seconds.
This usually requires from two to five washes and a total time of 2 to 4 hours.
This usually requires 9 to 12 washes and a total time of 2 to 4 hours.
The contractor, one engineer, and one surveyor inspected the 1-mile road.
but There were two six-room houses, three four-room houses, and four two-room cottages, and they were built by nine workers in thirty 5-day weeks. (See rule 12.21.)

12.7. Figures are used for serial numbers.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Bulletin 725 | 290 U.S. 325 |
| Document 71 | Genesis 39:20 |
| pages 352–357 | 202–512–0724 (telephone number) |
| lines 5 and 6 | the year 2001 |
| paragraph 1 | 1721–1727 St. Clair Avenue |
| chapter 2 | <i>but</i> Letters Patent No. 2,189,463 |

12.8. A colon preceding figures does not affect their use.

The result was as follows: 12 voted yea, 4 dissented.
The result was as follows: nine voted yea, seven dissented.

Measurement and time

12.9. Units of measurement and time, actual or implied, are expressed in figures.

a. Age:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 6 years old | a 3-year-old |
| 52 years 10 months 6 days | at the age of 3 (years implied) |

b. Clock time (see also Time):

4:30 p.m.; half past 4
 10 o'clock *or* 10 p.m. (*not* 10 o'clock p.m.; 2 p.m. in the afternoon; 10:00 p.m.)
 12 p.m. (12 noon)
 12 a.m. (12 midnight)
 4^h30^m *or* 4.5^h, in scientific work, if so written in copy
 0025, 2359 (astronomical and military time)
 08:31:04 (stopwatch reading)

c. Dates:

9/11 (referring to the attack on the United States that occurred on September 11, 2001)
 June 1985 (*not* June, 1985); June 29, 1985 (*not* June 29th, 1985)
 March 6 to April 15, 1990 (*not* March 6, 1990, to April 15, 1990)
 May, June, and July 1965 (*but* June and July 1965)
 15 April 1951; 15–17 April 1951 (military)
 4th of July (*but* Fourth of July, meaning the holiday)
 the 1st [day] of the month (*but* the last of April or the first [part] of May, *not* referring to specific days)
 in the year 2000 (*not* 2,000)

In referring to a fiscal year, consecutive years, or a continuous period of 2 years or more, when contracted, the forms 1900–11, 1906–38, 1931–32, 1801–2, 1875–79 are used (*but* upon change of century, 1895–1914 and to avoid multiple ciphers together, 2000–2001). For two or more separate years not representing a continuous period, a comma is used instead of a dash (1875, 1879); if the word *from* precedes the year or the word *inclusive* follows it, the second year is not shortened and the word *to* is used in lieu of the dash (from 1933 to 1936; 1935 to 1936, inclusive).

In dates, *A.D.* precedes the year (*A.D.* 937); *B.C.* follows the year (254 *B.C.*); *C.E.* and *B.C.E.* follow the year.

d. Decimals: In text a cipher should be supplied before a decimal point if there is no whole unit, and ciphers should be omitted after a decimal point unless they indicate exact measurement.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 0.25 inch; 1.25 inches | <i>but</i> .30 caliber (meaning 0.30 inch, |
| silver 0.900 fine | bore of small arms); 30 calibers |
| specific gravity 0.9547 | (length) |
| gauge height 10.0 feet | |

- e. Use spaces to separate groups of three digits in a decimal fraction.
(See rule 12.27.)

0.123 456 789; *but* 0.1234

- f. Degrees, etc. (spaces omitted):

longitude 77°04'06" E
35°30'; 35°30' N
a polariscopic test of 85°
an angle of 57°
strike N 16° E
dip 47° W *or* 47° N 31° W
25.5' (preferred) *also* 25'.5

but
two degrees of justice; 12
degrees of freedom
32d degree Mason
150 million degrees Fahrenheit
30 Fahrenheit degrees

- g. Game scores:

1 up (golf)
3 to 2 (baseball)

7 to 6 (football), etc.
2 all (tie)

- h. Market quotations:

4½ percent bonds
Treasury bonds sell at 95
Metropolitan Railroad, 109
Dow Jones average of 18500.76

gold is 109
wheat at 2.30
sugar, .03; *not* 0.03

- i. Mathematical expressions:

multiplied by 3
divided by 6

a factor of 2
square root of 4

- j. Measurements:

7 meters
about 10 yards
8 by 12 or 8 x 12 inches
8- by 12-inch page
2 feet by 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot 3
inches
2 by 4 or 2 x 4 (lumber) (*not* 2×4)
1½ miles
6 acres
9 bushels
1 gallon

3 ems
20/20 (vision)
30/30 (rifle)
12-gauge shotgun
2,500 horsepower
15 cubic yards
6-pounder
80 foot-pounds
10s (for yarns and threads)
f/2.5 (lens aperture)
4 by 4 or 4 x 4 truck

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| <i>but</i> | six bales |
| tenpenny nail | two dozen |
| fourfold | one gross |
| three-ply | zero miles |
| five votes | seven-story building |

k. Money:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| \$3.65; \$0.75; 75 cents; 0.5 cent | <i>but</i> |
| \$3 (<i>not</i> \$3.00) per 200 pounds | two pennies |
| 75 cents apiece | three quarters |
| Rs32,25,644 (Indian rupees) | one half |
| CHF 2.5 (Swiss francs) | six bits, etc. |
| 9 euros or 9€ | |
| 65 yen | |
| ₱265 | |

l. Percentage:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 12 percent; 25.5 percent; 0.5 percent | 50–50 (colloquial expression) |
| (<i>or</i> one-half of 1 percent) | 5 percentage points |
| thirty-four one hundredths of | a 1,100-percent increase, <i>or</i> an |
| 1 percent | 1100-percent increase |
| 3.65 bonds; 3.65s; 5–20 bonds; | |
| 5–20s; 4½s; 3s | |

m. Proportion:

| | |
|--------|----------|
| 1 to 4 | 1:62,500 |
| 1–3–5 | |

n. Time (see also Clock time):

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6 hours 8 minutes 20 seconds | <i>but</i> |
| 10 years 3 months 29 days | four centuries |
| 7 minutes | three decades |
| 8 days | three quarters (9 months) |
| 4 weeks | statistics of any one year |
| 1 month | in a year or two |
| 3 fiscal years; third fiscal year | four afternoons |
| 1 calendar year | one-half hour |
| millennium | the eleventh hour |
| FY 2010 | FY10 |

o. Unit modifiers:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 5-day week | a 5-percent increase |
| 8-year-old wine | 20th-century progress |
| 8-hour day | |
| 10-foot pole | <i>but</i> |
| ½-inch pipe | two-story house |
| 5-foot-wide entrance | five-member board |
| 10-million-peso loan | \$20 million airfield |

p. Vitamins:

B₁₂, B₇, A₁, etc.

Ordinal numbers

12.10. Except as indicated in rules 12.11 and 12.19, and also for day preceding month, figures are used in text and footnotes to text for serial ordinal numbers beginning with *10th*. In tables, leaderwork, footnotes to tables and leaderwork, and in sidenotes, figures are used at all times. Military units are expressed in figures at all times when not the beginning of a sentence, except *Corps*. (For ordinals in addresses, see rule 12.13.)

| | |
|--|--|
| 29th of May, <i>but</i> May 29 | eighth parallel; 38th parallel |
| First Congress; 102d Congress | fifth ward; 12th ward |
| ninth century; 21st century | ninth birthday; 66th birthday |
| Second Congressional District; 20th Congressional District | first grade; 11th grade |
| seventh region; 17th region | 1st Army |
| 323d Fighter Wing | 1st Cavalry Division |
| 12th Regiment | <i>but</i> |
| 9th Naval District | XII Corps (Army usage) |
| 7th Fleet | Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit |
| 7th Air Force | |
| 7th Task Force | Seventeenth Decennial Census (title) |

12.11. When ordinals appear in juxtaposition and one of them is *10th* or more, figures are used for such ordinal numbers.

This legislation was passed in the 1st session of the 102d Congress.
He served in the 9th and 10th Congresses.

From the 1st to the 92d Congress.

Their children were in 1st, 2d, 3d, and 10th grades.

We read the 8th and 12th chapters.

but The district comprised the first and second precincts.

He represented the first, third, and fourth regions.

The report was the sixth in a series of 14.

- 12.12.** Ordinals and numerals appearing in a sentence are treated according to the separate rules dealing with ordinals and numerals standing alone or in a group. (See rules 12.4, 12.5, and 12.24.)

The fourth group contained three items.

The fourth group contained 12 items.

The 8th and 10th groups contained three and four items, respectively.

The eighth and ninth groups contained 9 and 12 items, respectively.

- 12.13.** Beginning with *10th*, figures are used in text matter for numbered streets, avenues, etc. However, figures are used at all times and *street*, *avenue*, etc. are abbreviated in sidenotes, tables, leaderwork, and footnotes to tables and leaderwork.

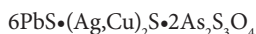
First Street NW.; *also* in parentheses: (Fifth Street) (13th Street); 810 West 12th Street; North First Street; 1021 121st Street; 2031 18th Street North; 711 Fifth Avenue; 518 10th Avenue; 51–35 61st Avenue

Punctuation

- 12.14.** The comma is used in a number containing four or more digits, except in serial numbers, common and decimal fractions, astronomical and military time, and kilocycles and meters of not more than four figures pertaining to radio.

Chemical formulas

- 12.15.** In chemical formulas full-sized figures are used before the symbol or group of symbols to which they relate, and inferior figures are used after the symbol.



Numbers spelled out

- 12.16.** Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence or head. Rephrase a sentence or head to avoid beginning with figures. (See rule 12.25 for related numbers.)

Five years ago . . . ; *not* 5 years ago . . .
 Five hundred fifty men hired . . . ; *not* 550 men hired . . .
 “Five-Year Plan Announced”; *not* “5-Year Plan Announced” (head)
 The year 2065 seems far off . . . ; *not* 2065 seems far off . . .
 Workers numbering 207,843 . . . ; *not* 207,843 workers . . .
 Benefits of \$69,603,566 . . . ; *not* \$69,603,566 worth of benefits . . .
 1958 REPORT *change to* THE 1958 REPORT
 \$3,000 BUDGETED *change to* THE SUM OF \$3,000 BUDGETED
 4 MILLION JOBLESS *change to* JOBLESS NUMBER 4 MILLION

- 12.17.** In verbatim testimony, hearings, transcripts, and question-and-answer matter, figures are used immediately following Q. and A. or name of interrogator or witness for years (e.g., 2015), sums of money, decimals, street numbers, and for numerical expressions beginning with *101*.

Mr. BIRCH, Junior. 2015 was a good year.
 Mr. BELL. \$1 per share was the return. Two dollars in 1956 was the alltime high. Two thousand twenty-nine may be another story.
 Colonel DAVIS. 92 cents.
 Mr. SMITH. 12.8 people.
 Mr. JONES. 1240 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004.
 Mr. SMITH. Ninety-eight persons.
 Q. 101 years? *But* Q. One hundred years?
 A. 200 years.
 Mr. SMITH. Ten-year average would be how much?

- 12.18.** A spelled-out number should not be repeated in figures, except in legal documents. In such instances use these forms:

five (5) dollars, *not* five dollars (5)
 ten dollars (\$10), *not* ten (\$10) dollars

- 12.19.** Numbers appearing as part of proper names, used in a hypothetical or inexact sense, or mentioned in connection with serious and dignified subjects such as Executive orders, legal proclamations, and in formal writing are spelled out.

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Three Rivers, PA, Fifteenmile Creek, etc. | three score years and ten |
| the Thirteen Original States | Ten Commandments |
| in the year two thousand eight | Air Force One (Presidential plane) |
| the One Hundred Tenth Congress | back to square one |
| millions for defense but not one cent for tribute | behind the eight ball |
| | our policy since day one |

- 12.20.** If spelled out, whole numbers should be set in the following form:

two thousand twenty
 one thousand eight hundred fifty
 one hundred fifty-two thousand three hundred five
 eighteen hundred fifty (serial number)

When spelled out, any number containing a fraction or piece of a whole should use the word “and” when stating the fraction or piece:

sixty-two dollars and four cents
 ninety-nine and three-tenths degrees
 thirty-three and seventy-five one-hundredths shares

- 12.21.** Numbers below 100 preceding a compound modifier containing a figure are spelled out.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| two ¾-inch boards | <i>but</i> |
| twelve 6-inch guns | 120 8-inch boards |
| two 5-percent discounts | three four-room houses |

- 12.22.** Indefinite expressions are spelled out.

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| the seventies; the early seventies; | midthirties (age, years, money) |
| <i>but</i> the early 1870s <i>or</i> 1970s | a thousand and one reasons |
| in his eighties, <i>not</i> his '80's <i>nor</i> 80's | <i>but</i> |
| between two and three hundred | 1 to 3 million |
| horses (<i>better</i> between 200 and 300 horses) | mid-1971; mid-1970s |
| twelvefold; thirteenfold; fortyfold; | 40-odd people; nine-odd people |
| hundredfold; twentyfold to | 40-plus people |
| thirtyfold | 100-odd people |
| | 3½-fold; 250-fold; 2.5-fold; 41-fold |

Words such as *nearly*, *about*, *around*, *approximately*, etc., do not reflect indefinite expressions.

The bass weighed about 6 pounds.

She was nearly 8 years old.

- 12.23.** Except as indicated in rules 12.5 and 12.9, a number less than 10 is spelled out within a sentence.

six horses

but

five wells

3½ cans

eight times as large

2½ times or 2.5 times

- 12.24.** For typographic appearance and easy grasp of large numbers beginning with *million*, the word *million*, *billion*, or *trillion* is used.

The following are guides to treatment of figures as submitted in copy. If copy reads—

\$12,000,000, *change to* \$12 million

2,750,000,000 dollars, *change to* \$2,750 million

2.7 million dollars, *change to* \$2.7 million

2¾ million dollars, *change to* \$2¾ million

two and one-half million dollars, *change to* \$2½ million

a hundred cows, *change to* 100 cows

a thousand dollars, *change to* \$1,000

a million and a half, *change to* 1½ million

two thousand million dollars, *change to* \$2,000 million

less than a million dollars, *change to* less than \$1 million

but \$2,700,000, *do not convert to* \$2.7 million

also \$10 to \$20 million; 10 or 20 million; between 10 and 20 million

4 million of assets

amounting to 4 trillion

\$1,270,000

\$1,270,200,000

\$2¾ billion; \$2.75 billion; \$2,750 million

\$500,000 to \$1 million

300,000; *not* 300 thousand
\$½ billion to \$1¼ billion (note full figure with second fraction); \$1¼ to \$1½ billion
three-quarters of a billion dollars
5 or 10 billion dollars' worth

12.25. Related numbers appearing at the beginning of a sentence, separated by no more than three words, are treated alike.

Fifty or sixty more miles away is snowclad Mount Everest.
Sixty and, quite often, seventy listeners responded.

but Fifty or, in some instances, almost 60 applications were filed.

Fractions

12.26. Mixed fractions are always expressed in figures. Fractions standing alone, however, or if followed by *of a* or *of an*, are generally spelled out. (See also rule 12.28.)

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| three-fourths of an inch; <i>not</i> ¾ inch <i>nor</i> ¾ of an inch | two one-hundredths |
| one-half inch | one-thousandth |
| one-half of a farm; <i>not</i> ½ of a farm | five one-thousandths |
| one-fourth inch | thirty-five one-thousandths |
| seven-tenths of 1 percent | <i>but</i> |
| three-quarters of an inch | ½ to 1¾ pages |
| half an inch | ½-inch pipe |
| a quarter of an inch | ½-inch-diameter pipe |
| one-tenth portion | 3½ cans |
| one-hundredth | 2½ times |

12.27. Fractions (¼, ½, ¾, ⅔, ⅕, ⅛, 1/2954) or full-sized figures with the shilling mark (1/4, 1/2954) may be used only when either is specifically requested. Mixed fractions in full-sized figures are joined with a hyphen (2-2/3). A comma should not be used in any part of a built-up fraction of four or more digits or in decimals. (See rule 12.9e.)

12.28. Fractions are used in a unit modifier.

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| ½-inch pipe; <i>not</i> | ¼-mile run | ⅞-point rise |
| one-half-inch pipe | | |

Roman numerals

12.29. A repeated letter repeats its value; a letter placed after one of greater value adds to it; a letter placed before one of greater value subtracts from it; a dashline over a letter denotes multiplied by 1,000.

Numerals

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|------------|----|-------------|-----|------------|-----------|
| I..... | 1 | XXV..... | 25 | LXX..... | 70 | D..... | 500 |
| II..... | 2 | XXIX..... | 29 | LXXV..... | 75 | DC..... | 600 |
| III..... | 3 | XXX..... | 30 | LXXIX..... | 79 | DCC..... | 700 |
| IV..... | 4 | XXXV..... | 35 | LXXX..... | 80 | DCCC..... | 800 |
| V..... | 5 | XXXIX..... | 39 | LXXXV..... | 85 | CM..... | 900 |
| VI..... | 6 | XL..... | 40 | LXXXIX..... | 89 | M..... | 1,000 |
| VII..... | 7 | XLV..... | 45 | XC..... | 90 | MD..... | 1,500 |
| VIII..... | 8 | XLIX..... | 49 | XCV..... | 95 | MM..... | 2,000 |
| IX..... | 9 | L..... | 50 | IC..... | 99 | MMM..... | 3,000 |
| X..... | 10 | LV..... | 55 | C..... | 100 | MMMM | |
| XV..... | 15 | LIX..... | 59 | CL..... | 150 | or MV..... | 4,000 |
| XIX..... | 19 | LX..... | 60 | CC..... | 200 | V..... | 5,000 |
| XX..... | 20 | LXV..... | 65 | CCC..... | 300 | M̄..... | 1,000,000 |
| | | LXIX..... | 69 | CD..... | 400 | | |

Dates

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|------|-------------|------|--------------|------|
| MDC..... | 1600 | MCMXX..... | 1920 | MCMLXX..... | 1970 |
| MDCC..... | 1700 | MCMXXX..... | 1930 | MCMLXXX..... | 1980 |
| MDCCC..... | 1800 | MCMXL..... | 1940 | MCMXC..... | 1990 |
| MCM or MDCCCC..... | 1900 | MCML..... | 1950 | MM..... | 2000 |
| MCMX..... | 1910 | MCMLX..... | 1960 | MMX..... | 2010 |